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MI5 case against Hollis hardens

by ANDREW WILSON

A GROUP of MI5 and former MI5 officers who have long believed that their former chief, Sir Roger Hollis, was for 27 years a Soviet agent are convinced that evidence against him is mounting.

Pressure to reopen the investigation coincides with changes at the top of the sister service, MI6 (the Secret Intelligence Service), where Sir Dick (Arthur) Franks has just handed over to a new 'C', or head, and also in MI5, where the Director-General, Sir Howard Smith, has retired.

The unofficial spokesman of the MI5 group, known in the Security Service as the 'Young Turks,' is the writer Chapman Pincher. *The Observer* publishes a letter from him today.

The most important new evidence, the Young Turks believe, is the Prime Minister's admission to the Commons last week that no record exists prior to 1964 of inducements and immunities offered to spies to secure their confessions.

Among immunities offered, of which the record appears to have been destroyed, is one offered in 1963 without success to the master spy Kim Philby.

The record of immunities is only a part of the large volume of records which, the Young Turks believe, Hollis had destroyed before he retired from the service in 1965.

They included material relating to a permanent joint MI5/MI6 section known as K7.

The early interrogation of Igor Gouzenko, the cypher clerk who defected from the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa in 1945. In this Gouzenko spoke of a Soviet spy in the senior echelons of MI5.

The tapes of 200 hours of interrogation of Anthony Blunt between 1964 and 1972, before he confessed to his wartime work in MI5 for the Russians.

The case of a British admiral, now dead, who worked in NATO and is thought to have been the source of documents passed to the Russians, to which the Admiralty spy John Vassall could not have had access.

Hollis's name continues to be vigorously defended by a number of important former colleagues, notably his successor, Sir Martin Furnival Jones.

'His positive contribution to security was invaluable,' said Sir Martin earlier this year.

But the fact remains that a joint committee of MI5 and MI6 known as the Fluency Committee, set up to investigate MI5 leaks and penetrations, decided in the late 1960s that Hollis was a suspect and should be interrogated.

The interrogation was carried out, after Hollis's retirement, by the successor to the Fluency Committee, a per-

There, during a nine-year stay, he became friendly with the American communist writer, Agnes Smedley. He may also have met an important Soviet agent, Ruth Kuczynski. Their time in Shanghai certainly coincided.

New evidence now suggests that Hollis and Kuczynski (who was also known as Sonia Schulz, Ursula-Maria Hamburger, and, later, Ursula Beurton) may have met later at Caux in Switzerland.

In the *Times* obituary Sir Dick White said that Hollis joined MI5 in 1936. That appears to have been a slip. He in fact joined in 1938.

Meanwhile more facts are coming to light about the scale of the Soviet penetration of MI5 as illuminated by the Anthony Blunt and Leo Long confessions.

It can now be revealed that one of the prime suspects was Jim Hale, a member of MI5's legal department. Hale, a barrister, died of a brain tumour shortly before the main investigation started in 1964.

Subsequent interrogation of other suspects convinced the service that Hale was deeply compromised.

Ormond Uren, the Special Operations Executive officer who was court-martialled in 1943 for passing secrets to the Russians, was not at Cambridge University, as our article last week implied, but attended a language school in Cambridge before the war, according to his SOE personal file.